

Questions Bulletin

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Number 7

The Methodist Federation for Social Action, an unofficial membership organization, seeks to deepen within the Church, the sense of social obligation and opportunity to study, from the Christian point of view, social problems and their solutions; and to promote social action in the spirit of Jesus. The Federation rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society and seeks to replace it with social-economic planning to develop a society without special class or group discriminations and privileges.

THE EVANSTON PROGRAM — TOWARDS PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

Under the scintillating chairmanship of our President, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, and with participation of every delegate in the thoroughly democratic Commission, plenary, and business sessions—M.F.S.A. members and chapter representatives from every area (Maine to California, Georgia to Oregon) met in Evanston September 4-6 to:

Forge a timely, positive, and prophetic program for peace, democracy, racial equality and brotherhood, social and economic justice and welfare—Share insights, experiences and techniques for more effective social action—

Make and enrich friendships—Enjoy the inspiration of high worship and illuminating addresses—

Confirm the Executive Committee's re-election of Jack R. McMichael as Executive Secretary for a two-year term—

Select MFSA officers and Committee members for the year—(subject to confirmation by paid-up voting members in the ballot on Page 28 of this Bulletin)—

Accept the generously-proffered hospitality of the Mill Valley, California, Methodist Church, to hold the next Membership Meeting there April 21-23, 1952, just prior to General Conference—

Refer to that meeting and the membership the possible deletion or revision of the latter part of the Social Questions Bulletin's masthead—

Decide to take no further action on organizational name since last fall's membership poll failed to effect a change—

Welcome an encouraging auditor's report and a financial report showing elimination of last year's \$2500 deficit and accumulation of a working surplus—through severe economy, much labor from volunteers, and loyal membership support—

Elect, as proposed by the Nominating Committee, two Associate Secretaries to serve on a volunteer basis without pay, and with special responsibility in the Southern and Western regions: Rev. William T. Brown, 806 Frolic Street, Fayetteville, N. C.; Rev. Mark Chamberlin, Route 3, Box 1033, Gresham, Oregon—

Thank the First Methodist Church and others in Evanston for the splendid hospitality given us in this 1951 Meeting.

Addresses were given by: Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Dr. Donald O. Soper of England, Jack R. McMichael, Darrell Randall ("Africa—Problem and Way Out"), Edward H. Meyerding of the American Civil Liberties Union ("In Defense of Our Bill of Rights"), Lucius Porter, former Congregational Missionary and Yenching University Professor in China ("Asia in Revolution—Towards Friendship and Cooperation"), Lewis M. Hoskins, who directs the American Friends Service Committee ("Steps to Peace"), and Sumpter M. Riley, Jr. ("Towards Uncurbed Brotherhood in Methodism"). Worship services were conducted by Henry Hitt Crane, Albert E. Barnett, and William T. Brown. Richest contributions were made in Commissions and from the floor by the widely-varied participants: a farmer and his wife from Nebraska, a League of Women Voters worker from the same state, a theolog from Boston, a locomotive engineer from Kansas, a father from California whose son fights with the American Army in North Korea and whose major concern was a defense of Conscientious Objectors to war, a mother and father who presented their two small children in the meeting for Christian baptism, a shoe manufacturer from Missouri, a cooperative movement leader from Illinois, pastors, laymen, laywomen, youth—from every area.

Space prevents publication here of the addresses or worship messages given. But these and full text of Commission reports will be made available, with contributions to cover costs requested.

Memorials from the Twin City Chapter were presented and discussed. The invitation previously extended all chapters to collect membership dues, was reiterated. (An up-to-date list recording each member's dues status will be furnished any such chapter.)

Chapters meeting certain standards can elect representatives directly to the Executive and National Committees. A standard local chapter (25 paid-up members, meeting and acting at least monthly) can elect two members directly to the National Committee. A standard Conference chapter (100 paid-up members, meeting and action at least twice yearly) can elect one member to the Executive Committee and five members to the National Committee, and can request and receive for its own chapter use (for example, sending its delegate to the Executive Committee meetings) up to \$1.00 for every paid adult member and \$.50 for every paid youth member. This was stressed at the Membership Meeting, and it was understood that the Executive Committee would consider further ways of facilitating direct chapter representation on the Executive Committee.

Members of the Executive and National Committees met after the membership meeting and referred to the Executive Committee the question of a possible change in National Office location.

Commission proposals adopted by the meeting follow:

PROPHETIC RELIGION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

I. Prophetic Religion's Foundations

As followers of Jesus, we are called to promote the Kingdom of God, God's rule of justice and love in every relationship of human life, and to interpret His message in terms of the relationships of men and nations.

In the spirit of the Prince of Peace, we reject the method of violence in promoting this kingdom. Through a living application of the teachings of Jesus we can serve God's Kingdom on earth.

This requires a universal social consciousness of the needs of all God's children regardless of racial, economic, political or other divisions, and that the resources of the world be considered as common wealth to be used in the spirit of Christian stewardship to meet the needs of those who are hungry and in need of clothing and shelter.

We should be as concerned about the physical and spiritual welfare of our neighbors all over the world as of our own, thus fulfilling the second great commandment: Love thy neighbor as thyself.

II. Constructive Alternatives

With a deep sense of humility and a need for repentance, but with a conviction that following God's will faithfully will bring peace, we appeal to all men of good will prayerfully and earnestly to dedicate their lives to build a world of brotherhood. We consider this the responsibility of everyone and urge on all individuals and nations the thoughtful consideration of the following points:

1. All nations should be urged to utilize more fully and sincerely the opportunities for international diplomacy now available in order to achieve better international understanding and make possible peaceful and honorable accommodation between nations. We regard the UN a strategic institution whose facilities for international conciliation should be strengthened. As a nation we now give to international agencies one-twentieth of one percent of what we spend for war. We should prove our dedication to international understanding by increasing our support of the UN.

2. We recommend the resolution on universal disarmament, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946, be implemented without further delay. We stress that our recommendation for disarmament is not unilateral but universal. We urge negotiations be

resumed at once to break the deadlock in the Atomic Energy Committee. We recommend that full development of atomic energy be turned to peaceful construction accompanied by a system of universal inspection to assure compliance.

3. We urge an extensive program of world development such as envisioned by Stringfellow Barr in "Let's Join the Human Race."

4. We affirm the statement of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of May, 1948: "Peace in the immediate future depends primarily on the establishment of better relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. Christian men and women especially have an inescapable responsibility to resist a mood of despair, blind hatred, hysteria and hopelessness. They should seek to develop mutual understanding in which differences with Russia can be reconciled. We affirm our conviction that war between the Soviet Union and the United States is not inevitable."

III. Militarization in the United States

The value of the individual and the emphasis on civilian participation and leadership have been cornerstones of our government. Therefore we are concerned about the encroachment of the military into many areas of American life.

1. One evidence of increased militarization is the steadily rising increase in military appropriations. Rising taxes are primarily for greater military costs rather than for development of natural resources, housing, education and other civilian needs.

2. A number of important government posts have been filled recently by trained military men, whereas the genius of our government has been its emphasis on civilian leadership.

3. Education has suffered a severe encroachment by militarization through increased numbers of R.O.T.C. units in both high schools and colleges, large research grants to colleges, scholarships and awards, and favorable publicity for professors and colleges that carry out military projects. We are particularly concerned to see Methodist colleges, and those of other churches, give way to the military. Placing training for killing on the same plane with education for service to humanity is not only wrong education but is contrary to the Christian teaching of love.

4. Our nation is threatened with compulsory peace-time universal military training (U.M.T.) for the first time.

5. Youth, who for conscience sake, feel they cannot participate in war or the war system, should have the full support, moral and financial, of our church which has taught them a primary loyalty to the will of God above men, and the church should provide a special fund for their needs.

IV. World Tension Areas

Our failure to recognize, in our policy and actions, the great awakening of the peoples of underdeveloped areas, has caused us to lose many friends, throughout the world. A sympathetic understanding of the validity of their aspirations for self determination and a more equitable share of the world's goods, and real negotiation within the frame-work of the UN of problems involved, could save us from situations which our present policy has tended to aggravate.

1. We recommend seating delegates of the Peoples Republic of China on the condition of a negotiated truce.

2. We call attention to Senator Johnson's resolution and urge the adoption of the principles in it, including cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of troops to the 38th parallel, during negotiations. We recommend eventual withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea and the establishment of a unified representative government.

3. We oppose denials of human rights in whatever country they are found. Therefore we heartily endorse the U. N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its study by our churches as a means to peace.

4. We condemn all attempts to continue and extend the control of economic monopoly over any activities and areas which would result in world tension.

V. Responsibility

As Christians vitally concerned with attaining world peace, and at the same time citizens of the United States, we are primarily interested in and capable of influencing our own government's policies. Hence, our attention in this statement is largely devoted to the United States' role in world affairs. However, we would have it known that we are fully cognizant of the fact that the Soviet Union and its allies share in the responsibility for the present international debacle. It is incumbent upon them, as well as upon the United States and the West, to dedicate themselves anew to the cause of peace. East and West share in the guilt for the current crisis and must share in the responsibility to secure peace.

VI. A Program of Action

1. Pray for Peace and hold Prayer vigil. Have those who come to pray write out their prayer and leave with their minister, who will put them into a composite prayer to send to our congressmen and State Department.

2. Commit ourselves sincerely to Christ, the Prince of Peace, and follow out implications of this commitment in tangible action.

3. Form discussion group in church and community to study

peace issues. Get speakers from the nearest consular offices and material for information from the different embassies.

4. Use movies and film strips free of charge from the UN. Film strips on Plans of Baruch and Gromyko, Friends Service Committee, for Atomic Energy Control are especially recommended.

5. Invite members of the Methodist Peace Commission to hold seminars in your local community. Ask people who have first-hand knowledge on conditions in other parts of the world to cooperate.

6. Protect the right to witness for peace. Be aware of the flagrant violations of the people's right to witness for peace, according to their conscience, by community pressures and by the government.

7. Promote letter-writing campaigns on current issues.

8. Participate in political campaigns.

9. Speak up for peace in groups and with individuals.

10. Call attention of people to good books and pamphlets

11. Attend meetings on peace.

12. Write peace letters to newspapers and magazines.

13. Invite Peace speakers into regular church and community meetings.

14. Circulate the International Red Cross Appeal Petition.

15. Cooperate with other peace groups, in harmony with our Christian ethics and faith.

PROPHETIC RELIGION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

Jesus' unequivocal principle of the mote and the beam is rebukingly relevant to the all too prevalent practice of the Methodist Church in race relations. We vigorously protest racial discrimination and segregation in society, while we allow this evil to persist in our churches. Effective witness against this pernicious practice is thereby nullified. Our actions speak so loudly that the world cannot hear what we say, or hearing, it scoffs at our hypocrisy. If the Church is to be Christian, or even decently democratic, it must pluck this betraying beam out of its own ecclesiastical eye. Then the malignant mote in the social eye can be seen and extracted. We call, therefore, for the repentance of our church in this crucial matter and the prompt repudiation of this evil so long excused and condoned. Methodism especially is discredited by compromise legislation that in effect legalizes the sin. This is glaringly apparent in the maintenance not only of the Central Jurisdiction but likewise of Central Conferences overseas. "Repent ye! Repent ye!" saith our God.

Looking toward the achievement for our Church of the right and freedom to seek correction of racial injustice in society in general, we respectfully memorialize the General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1952:

1. To make provision for a racially inclusive policy at all organizational levels in the Methodist Church;

2. To establish a special research Commission, with adequate representation of the racial groups in The Methodist Church to discover the most expeditious and sound ways and methods of establishing racial inclusiveness in the Methodist Church at all levels and in all geographical areas, and to provide adequate financial resources for such meetings, research and surveys, and professional assistance which this study may require.

This research commission shall make annual progress reports to the Council of Bishops, and shall release for publication such parts of these reports as in its judgment will prepare the general church membership for intelligent action on the commission's quadrennial report to be made to each General Conference.

For itself, the Methodist Federation for Social Action specifically advocates:

1. Elimination of segregation as an inherent structural part of the Methodist Church, both in the Continental United States and in the Church overseas.

2. Inclusion of Negro Churches in white conferences by mutual consent.

3. Encouragement of three or four experimental inter-racial churches.

PROPHETIC RELIGION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The World Council of Churches has condemned the errors in both Capitalism and Communism in its Report of the First Assembly at Amsterdam (See Amsterdam Report or full resolution, separately printed, for text)

MFSA accepts and makes its own the criticisms and affirmations of these paragraphs from the Report of the World Council

The pronouncement of the World Council of Churches does not propose any specific democratic alternative to Communism and Capitalism

It is the responsibility of groups of Christians such as the MFSA to point the way towards a world of prosperity and peace for all by presenting specific recommendations for the solution of the problems of poverty and riches

Cooperative economy has proven its ability to balance private, cooperative and public ownership and control through the application of brotherhood, fraternity and partnership to economic life.

We, therefore, advocate the more rapid expansion of the cooperative and public sectors of our economic system so as to successfully balance the private sector.

We advocate in general: The private ownership and control of farms, homes and small and specialty businesses; the cooperative ownership and control of businesses handling staple commodities of widespread use; and the public and cooperative ownership and control of monopolistic type utilities such as electric and atomic power production and distribution, flood control and irrigation, transportation and communication.

II. War Economy

Our nation is in a war economy, and a vast rearmament program. This threatens suffering through inflation, high taxation and rising costs. This menaces the living standards of the many. It has brought high profits for a few, sorely tempted to acquiesce in the drift toward global war.

Threat of peace has disturbed the industrial world and the Stock Market. But we fervently pray for peace in Korea.

Our Government does not hesitate to spend billions for bombs, tanks, and the implements of war. It should not hesitate to prepare for peace. Projects should be planned at home (such as MVA, St. Lawrence Seaway, slum clearance and low cost public housing) and abroad (elaboration of Point Four). Thus may be filled the vacuum created when our productive energies, now devoted to war-time purposes, are turned to peace-time projects, our industries kept going and unemployment avoided.

Our economic system should be so reconstructed that we do not have to resort to war to keep it functioning. A peace time economy with useful employment for all should be our goal.

III. Industrial Relations

We ask employers to be ever conscious of their Christian stewardship and would unite employer and employee alike in the common quest for the good life.

1. To this end we commend the example of sections of industry.
2. In all industrial relations exalt the worth of the individual.
3. We call attention to the evil consequences of the rising commodity prices such as
 - a. Removal of both parents from the home.
 - b. Prevalence of dietary deficiencies.
 - c. Nullification of social security and pensions benefits of the less favored social groups.
4. We favor free fellowship across economic and social barriers

IV. Labor

1. Let all wage earners join unions, to support fair labor standards for themselves and their fellow workers and to participate in the determination of conditions under which they work.
2. Eliminate anti-labor features of the Taft-Hartley Act and similar state legislation, and return to the principles of the Wagner National Labor Act. Seek minimum wage and annual wage legislation.

V. Consumers

Adam Smith once said that our interests as producers should be considered only to the extent of serving our best interests as consumers. Only by organizing ourselves as consumers in cooperatives to reduce prices, as well as organizing ourselves as producers in unions to increase pay, will we be able to prevent excessive profiteering by a few and distribute the national income justly

VI. Rural

Let rural church leaders interpret and implement the program of the MFSA and our Social Creed on the local, state, national and international level. We support a progressive program to meet rural needs,

1. Study cooperative ownership of farm machinery.
2. Guarantee floors under farm prices of a fixed percentage of parity.
3. Continue low-interest government loans to family farmers.
4. Expand rural electrification, telephone, road building; health, welfare, and cultural programs.
5. Demand legislation to curb the alarming expansion of large scale and corporation farm systems and protect the family type
6. Urge our Government to give full support to the original program of the International Food and Agriculture Organization.
7. Extend more federal employment services to farm labor groups.
8. Enlarge and expand federal aid to migrant labor.
9. Expand and extend soil conservation with direct payments to farmers for soil conservation practices.
10. Secure an ever-normal granary program on a much expanded basis, with emphasis on federal aid and loans to REA-type cooperatively owned storage facilities.

PROPHETIC RELIGION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES

We are living in unprecedented hysteria. Civil rights are violated with a speed that increases with the mounting preparations for war. In our policy of containing communism, we are moving toward our own brand of fascism. Persons must take oaths as to their loyalty, in trade unions, universities, and the federal government. Their records are investigated, and they are screened for loyalty, if they work for government or concerns handling important government contracts. Persons find their characters smeared, and lose their jobs, upon the word of professional spies and informers. Thought control increases among us. Persons are held to be guilty because of their associations. Deportations of aliens are being stepped up. People who work and speak for peace are labeled subversive. Persons arrested are held in excessive bail. We must see to it that accused persons are granted their day in court. Persons are accused by those who are shielded by congressional immunity, and have no equal recourse to self-defense. Lawyers and judges who consider or defend politically unpopular persons are intimidated. Organizations are named upon "subversive" lists without being heard. A heavy pall of fear has fallen upon our land. These things have come in the name of "security." But security without liberty is a delusion. We must speak out. We must defend the liberties of all persons including those who are more radical than we may be, or we shall finally lose our own.

Specific Recommendations

To remedy these abuses:

1. We recommend repeal of the Smith Act because it vitiates the First Amendment. We hold with Justice Black's decision: "There is hope, however, that in calmer times, when present pressures, passions and fears subside, this or some later court will restore the First Amendment liberties to the high preferred place where they belong in a free society."
2. We recommend repeal of the McCarran Act. We condemn it because it holds men guilty by association and puts the government in the thought control business. These laws are superfluous. Ample laws already exist to protect our country from violence and sabotage.
3. We recommend repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, whose loyalty oath requirements infringe on democratic liberties.
4. We recommend repeal of all state or local laws which are repressive of civil liberties.
5. We recommend the end of political deportations and the protection of the rights of the foreign born.
6. We protest the violation, in the cases of political prisoners, of the Eighth Amendment of the Bill of Rights, which forbids the requirement of excessive bail.
7. We demand the right of people to work for peace according to the dictates of their consciences without the danger of imprisonment as foreign agents, as in the case of Dr. W. E. B. DuBois.
8. We call for the abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and similar state committees.
9. It is a denial of our democracy to list organizations as "subversive" without their having opportunity of defending themselves. We rejoice in the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court handed down in May, 1951, holding that the Attorney General could not constitutionally put an organization on his so-called "subversive" list without a hearing.
10. We call for the revoking of the President's Loyalty Order, because under it vague charges can be brought by accusers, providing the accused with no opportunity of knowing or cross-examining their accusers, and because of which many persons have lost their livelihood, without due cause.
11. We call for Federal laws to abolish the poll-tax, outlaw lynching and abolish discrimination in housing.
12. We protest the distinction between religious and non-religious conscientious objectors, and we urge all be given exemption under the law. We condemn giving conscientious objectors excessive sentences.

Steps to Action

1. Disseminate the facts regarding the infringement of democratic liberties by every means possible.
2. When the civil rights of persons are jeopardized in our community by the release of charges by the Un-American Activities Committee or similar organizations, we should ascertain the facts. If these people have been wronged we should give them our moral support and encourage them to defend themselves
3. Call for Church and community conferences to discuss and act upon local and national violations of civil rights.
4. Work, wherever possible, with existing organizations which are defending civil rights.
5. Support and encourage lawyers and others carrying on the fight for civil liberties.
6. Assist in raising bail fund for victims of violations
7. Engage in political action to select and elect good men to office.

METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION

Ballot

Only paid-up voting members may vote. If in arrears, please send dues in with the ballot.

These officers and committee nominees were elected by the National Membership Meeting in Evanston. Your confirmation is requested; you may substitute names throughout the ballot if you wish. Officers are automatically on the Executive Committee.

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69. Mrs. Frank L. Wright, active laywoman, St. Louis
70. Rev. Nelson Wurgler, Marfa, Texas

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(Send to M.F.S.A., Rm. 402, 150 Fifth Ave., N. Y. 11, N. Y.)

As a voting member in arrears I enclose \$..... to bring my membership up to date.

As a paid-up Bulletin subscriber (\$2) I enclose \$3 to step up my voting membership status (\$5 minimum for adult) ☐

As a paid-up voting member I vote to confirm ☐ reject ☐ the above slate of Officers and Committee members selected at the Evanston Membership Meeting. I enclose proposed revisions or suggestions ☐

Signed

Address

SOCIAL QUESTIONS BULLETIN

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Executive Secretary and Editor—JACK R. McMICHAEL

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